



The Autobiography of Abraham Lincoln

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VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
OF THE
UNITED STATES

REPRODUCED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE HEIRS
AND DECENDANTS OF JESSE W. FELL

I was born Feb 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families, ^{perhaps I should say} My mother, who died in my ^{fourth} ~~ninth~~ year, was of a family of the name of Harts, some of whom now reside in Adams, and others in Mason Counties, Illinois. My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky, about 1781 or 2, where, a year or two later, he was killed by Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His grandson, who was Quaker, went to Virginia from Berks County, Pennsylvania. An effort to identify them with the New-England family, ^{of the same name} ~~was~~ ^{is} in nothing more definite, than a similarity of Christian names in both families, such as Enos, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like.

My father, at the death of his father, was but five years of age; and he grew up, literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Ind., and, in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals, still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher, beyond "reading, writing, and ciphering." ~~Reading, writing, and ciphering~~ to the Rule of Three. If a stranger ^{supposed to understand Latin} happened to sojourn in

the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a
wizzard— There was absolutely nothing to excite
ambition for education. Of course when I came of
age, I did not know much— Still somehow, I could
read, write, and cipher to the Rule of Three, but
that was all— I have not been to school since—
The little advances I now have upon this slow educa-
tion, I have ~~been~~ picked up from time to time under
the pressure of necessity—

I was raised to farm work, which I continued
till I was twenty-two— At twenty-two, I came to
Illinois, and passed the first year in Illinois
Macou County— Then I got ^{at that time} to New Salem ~~(then)~~,
in Sangamon, now in Menard County, where I per-
manence a year as a sort of blacksmith
shop— Then came the Black Hawk war,
and I was elected a Captain of Volunteers—
a success which gave me more pleasure
than any I have had since— I went the
campaign, was elected, ran for the Legislature the
same year (1832), and was beaten— the only time
I ever have been beaten by the people— The next,
and three succeeding biennial elections, I was elected
to the Legislature— I was got a candidate
afterwards. During this legislative period I had
studious law, and removed to Springfield to
study, practiced it— In 1846 I was once elected
to the lower House of Congress— Was not a can-
didate for re-election— From 1849 to 1854, both

inclination, practical far more ardent than ever
before. Always a whig in politics, and generally
on the whig electoral tickets, making active cam-
paigns. I was losing interest in politics, when
the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused
me again. What I have done since then is
pretty well known.

If any personal description of me is thought ~~worth~~
desirable, it may be said, I am, in height, six
feet, four inches, near; lean in flesh, weighing, on
an average, one hundred and eighty pounds; dark
complexion, with coarse black hair, and grey eyes.
No other marks or bones peculiarities.

Yours J. N. Felt.

Yours very truly
A. Lincoln



Washington, D.C. March 28. 1854

We the undersigned hereby certify that the
foregoing statement is in the hand
writing of Abraham Lincoln.

David Davis
Lyman Summell
Charles Sumner